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Heritage signers: language profile questionnaire

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Heritage Signers:
Language Profile Questionnaire

By
Su Kyong Isakson
A thesis submitted to
Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

February 25, 2016

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EVALUATION PAGE

The undersigned members of the Graduate Faculty of Western Oregon University
have examined the enclosed thesis entitled:

**Heritage Signers:
Language Profile Questionnaire**

Presented by: Su Kyong Isakson


A candidate for the degree of: Master of Arts, Interpreting Studies

And hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for this master's degree.

Date: 3/10/2016

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To be seen is no small thing.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASL	American Sign Language
ABE.....	Adult Based Education
BFLA	Bilingual First Language Acquisition
CASAS.....	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems
Coda/Coda	Children (or Child) of Deaf Adult(s)
ESLA	Early Second Language Acquisition
HL	Heritage Language
HLL	Heritage Language Learner
HS	Heritage Signer
HSLL	Heritage Sign Language Learner
IEP	Interpreter Education Program
ITP	Interpreter Training Program
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LSLA	Late Second Language Acquisition
RID	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

ABSTRACT

Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire

By

**©2015 Su Kyong Isakson
Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies
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December 2015**

The instruction of American Sign Language historically has employed a foreign language pedagogy; however, research has shown foreign language teaching methods do not address the distinct pedagogical needs of heritage language learners. Framing deaf-parented individuals as heritage language learners capitalizes on the wealth of research on heritage speakers, particularly of Spanish. This study seeks to address three issues. First, it seeks to ascertain whether the assessment instrument developed successfully elicits pedagogically relevant data from deaf-parented individuals that frames them as heritage language learners of ASL. Second, it seeks to draw similarities between the experiences of deaf-parented individuals in the United States and heritage speakers of spoken languages such as Spanish. Third, after considering the first two, it addresses the question of whether deaf-parented individuals may therefore benefit from the pedagogical theory of heritage language learners. Using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, an assessment instrument was distributed to individuals over 18 years of age, who

were raised by at least one deaf parent and had used and or understood signed language to any degree of fluency. This study seeks to test the soundness of the instrument's design for use with the deaf-parented population. A review of participant responses and the literature highlights similarities in the experiences of heritage speakers and deaf-parented individuals, gesturing toward the strong possibility that deaf-parented individuals should be considered heritage language learners where ASL is concerned. The pedagogy used with deaf-parented individuals therefore should adapt the theories and practices used with heritage speakers.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Prior to the training and professionalization of sign language interpreters, there were Cudas¹. Children of deaf adults (Cudas), as well as close family and clergy, have long been known to fill the role of interpreter for those who are deaf (Janzen & Korpiniski, 2005). With the passing of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendment (P.L. 83-565) in 1954 came an increased demand among the deaf community to access education and employment opportunities. This in turn created a demand for interpreting services. With the sudden increase in demand for interpreting services came a need to train American Sign Language (ASL)/English interpreters, and thus second language learners (L2) of ASL and deaf-parented individuals began entering interpreter education programs en masse. The federal government allocated funding through the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965 (Section 9) P.L. 89-833, the Higher Education Act of 1968, the Amendment to the

¹Throughout this paper I will be using three terms to describe the population under study. *Deaf-parented* is an all-inclusive term to describe an individual who has one or more deaf parent(s), regardless of audiological status. *Coda* is a term used to describe the identity of hearing deaf-parented individuals, and will be used interchangeably with *deaf-parented*. *Heritage signer* refers to deaf-parented individuals who used or understood signed language in their home to some degree. In this paper, the use of the term *heritage signer* will be referring to hearing deaf-parented individuals.

Vocational Rehabilitation Act in 1968, and the Education of the Handicapped Act in 1968, to research and develop interpreter education (Ball, 2013).

The American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA), established in 1975, “provided standardization and facilitation of sign language instruction which contributed to the acceptance of ASL as a language course offering in educational institutions” (American Sign Language Teachers Association History). This came after the seminal works on the linguistic structure of ASL by Dr. William Stokoe and his Deaf² colleagues Carl Croneberg, Dolores Casterline, Carol Padden, and Barbara Kannapell, which legitimized American Sign Language. Around that time, increased enrollment of students of Mexican ancestry made universities in the Southwest note the need for a suitable pedagogy to teach Spanish to heritage speakers³ (Valdés, 2001). As the new discipline of heritage language instruction develops among Spanish teachers, ASL teachers were just emerging on the scene.

Fast forward to 2016. There are now more than 170 interpreter education programs across the United States offering academic credentials ranging from certificates to graduate level degrees in signed language interpretation. While interpreter training programs have changed since the mid-60’s, from eight-week

² “We use the lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture. The members of this group have inherited their sign language, use it as a primary means of communication among themselves, and hold a set of beliefs about themselves and their connection to the larger society. We distinguish them from, for example, those who find themselves losing their hearing because of illness, trauma or age; although these people share the condition of not hearing, they do not have access to the knowledge, beliefs, and practices that make up the culture of Deaf people” (Padden & Humphries, 1988, p. 2).

³ A heritage speaker is defined as one “who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (Valdés, 2001, p. 38)

trainings to graduate-level degrees, the courses, curriculum, and teaching methodology of American Sign Language by and large remain targeted towards second-language learners of ASL. A review of the National K-16 ASL Standards (2013) indicates heritage language learning as an emerging issue while the accounts of deaf-parented interpreters in Williamson's (2015) survey portray it as a known issue. In the case of Spanish speakers, institutional efforts to respond to the problem of heritage speakers of Spanish did not result in a unified theory of pedagogy or practice; nearly 30 years later there were still disagreements about the appropriate outcomes and goals of instruction (Valdés, 2001). The following are a few examples of the issues debated in heritage language instruction⁴:

- The difference between foreign language and heritage language instruction
- The implications of the study of linguistic differences for the teaching of Spanish to bilingual students
- The role of the foreign language teaching profession in maintaining minority languages

As these debates begin to enter the field of signed language instruction, the wealth of academic research on heritage speakers of Spanish and other heritage languages may serve to guide future research.

⁴ The complete list can be found on page 13 of Valdés' *Heritage Language Students: Profiles and Possibilities* (2001).

Statement of the problem

The instruction of American Sign Language historically has employed a foreign language teaching framework; however, research has shown foreign language teaching methods do not address the distinct pedagogical needs of heritage language learners. Framing deaf-parented individuals as heritage language learners capitalizes on the wealth of research on heritage speakers, particularly of Spanish.

Purpose of study

Educating heritage sign language learners requires American Sign Language teachers to use pedagogically relevant data to inform diagnostic, placement, and formative assessment decisions in post-secondary institutions. In order to achieve this, instructors must have a suitable tool adapted and designed to elicit data encompassing the community's linguistic and cultural diversity. This study seeks to test the soundness of the instrument's design for use with the heritage signing population to ascertain whether the instrument developed successfully elicits pedagogically relevant data from deaf-parented individuals that frames them as heritage language learners of ASL, adding to previous research conducted by Williamson (2014) exploring the induction practices of deaf-parented interpreters.

Theoretical basis and organization

By framing heritage signers as heritage language learners, the theoretical and methodological basis of American Sign Language pedagogy is broadened to consider the expansive research on heritage speakers in the U.S. A review of the literature highlights similarities in the experiences of heritage speakers and heritage signers, gesturing toward the strong possibility that heritage signers should be considered heritage language learners where ASL is concerned. The pedagogy used with heritage signers therefore should adapt the theories and practices used with heritage speakers.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The term *heritage language* is used “by those concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of non-English languages in the United States” (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). The U.S. can be categorized as having three strands of heritage language: Indigenous, Colonial, and Immigrant (Fishman, 2001). Research in the field of heritage language (HL) began as a national security government initiative during the Cold War, funding the seminal works of sociolinguist Joshua A. Fishman. Since then, heritage language instruction has grown to serve various motivations of heritage speakers, including career and family; however, most, if not all, HL research has focused on the preservation and instruction of *spoken* language. American Sign Language is considered colonial and indigenous⁵ to North America amongst a very

⁵ American Sign Language as it is used and known today is said to have roots in eighteenth-century Old French sign language (*langue des signes française* or LSF). In 1817, Laurent Clerc, a deaf teacher from the first public school for the deaf in France opened, with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the American School for the Deaf (formerly The American Asylum for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb) in Hartford, Connecticut, to the first-generation of deaf students to use modern-day ASL (Supalla & Clark, 2015). However, prior to Clerc’s arrival to Hartford, a large settlement of hereditary deaf families existed in Martha’s Vineyard, whose ancestors immigrated to Massachusetts in the mid 1600’s from Weald, England. Isolation and interfamily marriage contributed to the subsequent population of deaf individuals, so numerous in fact that it is said that in Martha’s Vineyard, everyone spoke signed language (Groce, 1985). Beginning in the 1820’s, Martha’s Vineyard children were sent

exclusive population; and while ASL may not serve the needs of national security, we may also presume the motivations of heritage signers to learn ASL exist and should be considered. The study of heritage language is relatively young, where by contrast there is a large amount of information on second language acquisition. “A great deal less is known about individuals who acquire their first language in bilingual contexts, and almost nothing is known about how a bilingual individual’s range in each of his or her languages changes and develops over time. We know enough, however, to make us suspect that the process of further development of a first language is fundamentally different from the process of L2 acquisition” (Valdés, 2001, p. 21).

Heritage signers in post-secondary institutions

In 2003, members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) passed a motion to add an education requirement for all interpreters wishing to be RID certified. This requirement mandates that all hearing⁶ interpreters have at

to Connecticut for schooling, where their natural signed language came in contact with LSF; however, to which degree Martha’s Vineyard’s sign language affected the development of modern ASL is unknown. Although, accounts of Groce’s informants recall their language resembled ASL in many ways, they also stated remembering many signs that were different than ASL, and would even struggle to understand the language used by deaf individuals not from Martha’s Vineyard. It would appear modern-day ASL may be considered a colonial language, however, we know as early as the mid 1500’s, Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL), was widely used by both hearing and deaf individuals alike to be able to communicate across the barrier of 40 different languages by the many Native American nations across North America and Canada, including the Gulf of Mexico. Davis (2007) found through his analysis of PISL and ASL a “relatively high range of lexical similarity” which “indicates possible lexical borrowing between the languages.” Therefore, ASL may be considered both indigenous and colonial heritage languages utilized by an exclusive population within the United States.

⁶ The term ‘hearing’ refers to those individuals with typical hearing ability, pursuing either the previously available CI/CT or NIC.

minimum a bachelor's degree in any discipline beginning June 30, 2012, and that all deaf interpreters fulfill the same requirement beginning June 30, 2016 (Educational Requirement Motion). As a result, the increased demand for interpreting services compels the need for post-secondary ASL courses, and the new educational requirement may compel interpreters to consider pursuing post-secondary interpreter training and education.

A 2015 survey conducted by Williamson of 751 deaf-parented interpreters (see Table 1), including both hearing and deaf children of deaf adults, has shed some light on deaf-parented individuals' pathways to becoming a professional interpreter. Until Williamson's survey, knowledge about the education and experience of deaf-parented interpreters was largely anecdotal. Now, fifty years after the passing of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1965, there is an opportunity to reflect upon the state of interpreter education for the deaf-parented population. Nearly half of the respondents to Williamson's survey reported entering the field of interpreting between the ages of 17 and 22, and nearly 80% of participants surveyed characterized their entrance into the field as they "fell into" interpreting. While 293 (39% of n=751) respondents indicated having attended an Interpreter Education Program (IEP) or Interpreter Training Program (ITP) for any length of time, 214 (28.5% of n=751), actually completed their program; which included certificate programs, AA, BA, and MA degrees. This could be understood to mean that an overwhelming 71.5% of deaf-parented individuals either did not attend or did not complete an IEP/ITP in the path to becoming an interpreter. Interestingly, thirty-two (9% of n=293) deaf-parented interpreters reported having attended 2 or more

IEP/ITPs (A. Williamson, personal communication, February 21, 2016). A closer look at the 92 respondents which provided additional information for not completing their IEP/ITP revealed three-quarters of the responses fell into three categories: issues with instructors/classmates/programs, electing to pick and choose classes within the program, and attaining certification or a job as an interpreter while in the program (Williamson, 2015). The first two categories hint at social and affective factors, such as how deaf-parented interpreters perceive their HL fluency and identity development via the heritage language and culture, as opposed to how peers and instructors may perceive them. These factors have been shown to impact the teaching and learning experience of heritage language learners. Furthermore, a review of respondent demographics of the Williamson survey (Table 1) reported a total of five percent of respondents identify as Latino (3.3%), Black/African American (1.6%), and Asian (0.1%) and 2.8% identify as Mixed. Therefore, it is worth noting the potential for additional impact of social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity of the heritage language and culture of immigrant communities confounding the already isolating IEP/ITP experience of deaf-parented interpreters. These factors may lend itself to a negative experience, which contribute to the retention of deaf-parented interpreters within IEP/ITP programs and act as a deterrent for other heritage signers to consider formal interpreter training programs. For those who do not meet the RID education requirement, however, they may submit proof of “life experience, years of professional experience, years of education (credit hours) not totaling a formal degree” to fulfill the Alternative Pathway to Eligibility criteria for RID certification

(Alternative Pathway to Eligibility). Because this alternative exists, it is unclear how many deaf-parented individuals entered IEP/ITP programs with the sole purpose of satisfying the education requirement for RID certification as opposed to seeking to develop or improve their skill as interpreters.

(n=751)	Gender	(n=751)	Age	(n=751)	Race/Ethnicity
Male	19.64%	18-35	39.5%	White	87.1%
Female	81.09%	36-55	48.6%	Latino/a	3.3%
Trans	.27%	56 +	11.8%	Black/AA	1.6%
				Asian	0.1%
				Mixed/Other	
				or Prefer not to	2.8%/5.1%
				Answer	

Table 1: Summary of Williamson (2015) participant demographics

Mitchell (2005) estimated approximately 131,000 to 188,500 Codas in the U.S. used a signed language at home. If a large percentage of Codas are working as interpreters and interpreter education programs are widely available, then why do so few Codas choose to enter an interpreter education program? Furthermore, why do so few Codas working as interpreters choose to pursue an IEP/ITP or fail to graduate from such a program? To better understand these issues we must explore Codas in the context of heritage language learners (HLL).

Assessing heritage language learners

In *Heritage Language Students: Profiles and Possibilities*, Guadalupe Valdés (2001) offers a profile of heritage language learners in the U.S. and discusses various aspects of heritage language instruction. A heritage language learner is described as

a “language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (Valdés, 2001, p. 3-4). Valdés highlights that while foreign language instruction has primarily focused on the development of L2 students, little is known about further developing the first language of bilinguals, except that the process is fundamentally different. Five factors with spoken-language HLL have been shown to correlate with competency in the HL: historical, linguistic, educational, affective, and cultural (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012, Carreira & Kagan, 2011). We will examine these five factors as it applies to the language and community of heritage signers; however, for the purposes of this discussion we will not address the experience of deaf children born to deaf parents, because this population is likely to develop native fluency in signed language from early and ongoing exposure to the HL, receive schooling in their HL with the exception of mainstreamed students (Compton, 2014), unlike their hearing deaf-parented counterparts for whom there is greater variability in HL competency.

Historical dimension: type of HL and generational status

Much of the existing research on heritage language learners and heritage language instruction in the U.S. has focused on the development and maintenance of spoken immigrant heritage languages, whether it was in the interest of national security as it was during the Cold War, or efforts towards linguistic and cultural revival funded by foreign governments. Many heritage languages may fall into more than one category, such as Spanish, which is both colonial in the Southwest and

immigrant in many other parts of the country (Beaudrie et al, 2014). American Sign Language may also belong in more than one category as it is both an indigenous and colonial to the United States. Understanding ASL as a native language among U.S. heritage signers proves beneficial to realizing how through the progression and evolution of language gives rise to the linguistic diversity we see among the U.S. Deaf community, and subsequently heritage signers.

Silva-Corvalán's (2003) research on the impact of generational status and competency in spoken HL indicates that with each generation in the United States, competency in the HL declines (as cited in Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Previous research by Fishman (1991), Silva-Corvalán (2003), and Veltman (2000) has authors Carreira & Kagan (2011) to conclude "[T]ypically, foreign-born retain strong skills in the HL, while second- and especially third-generation speakers show evidence of incomplete acquisition and loss of linguistic structures. Beyond the third generation, few HL learners retain a functional command of their language" (p. 42). Valdés (2001) summarizes this progression of bilingual HL competency in Table 2. Upon immigration, bilingual families become isolated from the rich variety and context of language used in their home country, and thus may find their language at risk of attrition and structural loss (Valdés, 2001). As a result, bilingual immigrants may transmit their mother tongue to the next generation in this new variety, which presents differently than the language of their home country.

1 st Generation	Monolinguals in Heritage A	Incipient Bilinguals Ab
2 nd and 3 rd Generation	HL Dominant AB	English Dominant Ba
4 th Generation	English Dominant Ba	English Monolingual B
HL = Heritage Language; Aa = Heritage Language; Bb= English		

Table 2: HL Competency by Generational Status (Valdés, 2001, Carreira & Kagan, 2011)

Taking into consideration circumstances surrounding signed language acquisition in the United States and its effect on generational status requires a look at not only its historical dimension but also its statistical prevalence among the population. In Table 3, Compton summarizes the various groups of heritage signers, and their primary source for accessing American Sign Language. According to Mitchell & Karchmer (2004) 5% of deaf adults are born to deaf parents. These deaf-parented children are considered to have native sign ability and according to Compton (2014) are heritage signers. In comparison, Bishop & Hicks (2008) and Mitchell et al. (2006) assert that of all the children born to deaf parents, more than 80% are hearing; therefore, “the majority of native signers are not deaf, but rather hearing” (Compton, 2014, p. 275). While Compton takes a broad sociolinguistic definition of heritage signers, this study takes a more narrow linguistic approach by defining heritage signers as individuals who have had native exposure to sign language from birth in the home but are exposed to the dominant spoken language in school and out in the community. Heritage signers may present like native deaf signers but may exhibit protracted, incomplete or divergent grammar (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007; Rothman, 2009; Reynolds et al, 2015).

Heritage signers	Deaf Families	Early Intervention Services/Community Services	Schools for the Deaf/Mainstream Education
Deaf children of deaf parents	X		
Hearing children of deaf parents (Codas)	X		
Deaf children of hearing parents		X	X
Hearing Parents of deaf children		X	X
Hearing siblings of deaf children		X	X
Hearing spouses of deaf adults and codas		X	X

Table 3: Heritage signers and their primary pathways to accessing ASL

According to Hoffmeister (2007), “hearing children of deaf adults are removed from the Deaf world after one generation because the culture and the language are not passed on from parent to child... [A] possible reason for this is that it’s easier to assimilate into the Hearing culture... [T]hey are not easily identifiable and therefore not visible within either culture.” Therefore, the use and transmission of sign language to the hearing deaf-parented population may only be “one-generation thick” (p. 191). Hearing deaf-parented children most likely resemble the 3rd/4th generation children of bilingual immigrants (see Table 2) presenting varying sign competence and fluency. Given that 95% of Codas’ deaf parents were born to hearing non-native signers, their deaf parents can present a range of signed language competence and fluency dependent upon their age of acquisition. This time of signed language acquisition can range from early childhood to late in life, and the variety of signed language they use may present differently than what has been documented amongst multi-generational deaf families. The declining

competence and fluency in the HL as suggested by Silva-Corvalán's study might in fact be expedited within the sign language community. However, this may not be unique only to signed languages, as in cases where immigrated families choose not to use their HL with their children in order to promote faster assimilation into the majority culture. The second generation, having minimal exposure to their HL, may choose in turn to pass on their HL to their children. This third generation will be exposed to a language appearing very different than in their grandparent's home country. This may be analogous to hearing deaf-parented children receiving language inputs from their non-native deaf parents, especially those parents who have had late exposure to signed language.

Linguistic dimension: age and order of acquisition, prestige, and register

In the field of language acquisition, three terms are used to describe bilinguals, which reflect the age of when the first (L1) and second (L2) languages were acquired: bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) indicates both languages are acquired from birth, early second language acquisition (ESLA) describes L2 acquisition between 1 ½ and 4 years, and late second language acquisition (LSLA) indicates L2 acquisition after the age of 4 years (Beaudrie et al, 2014). This, however, does not suggest equal exposure or acquisition of the L1 and L2; bilinguals may range from 'passive,' with the ability only to understand, to 'balanced,' which indicates perfectly balanced receptive and expressive abilities in both languages. In practice, bilinguals often are more comfortable with particular topics in one language over the other (Beaudrie et al, 2014). The age of acquisition is particularly

significant for LSLA children, as learning an L2 at age 4 may prove to yield greater competency than at age 10, which is when the child's "critical period" for language development begins to close.

While research has shown heritage speakers present challenges in the linguistic structures of phonology, morphology, discourse, lexical and syntax (see Montrul 2010; Rothman, 2009), heritage signers are no different (see Lillo-Martin et al., 2012; Palmer, 2015; Quadros et al., 2013 and Reynolds, in progress). In addition to the developmental aspects of acquisition must also consider societal pressures to attain English fluency. This may be particularly relevant for hearing deaf-parented children, in light of society's view of deafness. Through this lens, sign language is a communication tool to aid one with an auditory deficiency, rather than the language of a rich and diverse community with its own cultural identity. Those outside of the Deaf community commonly hold this misconception; daily interaction with people outside the community reinforces the primacy of English for hearing deaf-parented children, causing the minority language and culture to lose status (Lane, 1992). In addition to external pressures that impact our view of signed language, there are internal pressures as well; that is to say, even within the signed language community there is debate about ASL.

Language prestige is the idea that one dialect of a language is in some way better than or represents the "standard" language. A heritage language learner (HLL) who has acquired a stigmatized dialect may find there is an emphasis on learning the "correct or standard" dialect in the classroom, which may deepen student linguistic insecurity and impact learner motivation (Beaudrie et al, 2014). In

Hill's (2012) study of Language Attitudes in the American Deaf Community, he stated that "[w]ith the diversity in the Deaf community in terms of education, family, and social backgrounds, it is no wonder why there is a call for the standardization of ASL, the perceived status of ASL and English in terms of prestige, and the extent of English influence in the signing of Deaf people have emerged as issues" (p. 78). Hill's subjects made judgments about what characterized *strong ASL*, *mixed*, and *signed English* and which was considered *pure*, which lends ASL to the argument of prestige within the North American Deaf community, and therefore also to Codas.

The term "register" refers to the different levels of formality used with different interlocutors; heritage speakers are often aware that different registers are needed but may not have the language ability required for expression (Beaudrie et al, 2014). This is often the result of the context in which the HL was used, and as our lives rarely present experiences in fully bilingual contexts, it is quite easy to see how the acquisition of language does not occur equally or at the same pace. Often, HLL may present as fully capable bilinguals, when in fact they may only possess conversational level competency having used their HL with their parent(s) or grandparent(s) in the home. This may also be true of heritage signers, especially when we consider the widespread availability of English in a variety of contexts as compared to signed language.

Educational dimension: type and amount of schooling in heritage language

Beaudrie et al (2014) have indicated three important educational variables for assessing HL fluency of heritage learners: overall formal education, home

literacy practices, and formal education received in the HL. In the U.S., programs and schools for the deaf are funded through federal appropriations in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Assistance To States For The Education Of Children With Disabilities, 2006). Eligibility criteria for services under IDEA do not include those children born with typical hearing to deaf parents, as they can access education in English through auditory means at their home area school; therefore, like HLL who immigrated to the U.S. before the age of 5, they most likely do not have any schooling in their heritage language. However, foreign governments have previously allocated funds to support cultural and language revival among immigrants leading to the development of community based heritage language schools. These community schools, organized by language and culture, are available to heritage speakers of all ages and may be found in various locations across the U.S. This benefit however is not extended to signed languages, and in fact, an online search results in a just a handful of ASL/English bilingual charter schools in the U.S.; although, opportunities to attend these schools are limited by geography and resources. Thus, education for hearing deaf-parented children conducted in ASL is largely inaccessible.

Heritage speakers, who have learned to read and write in their HL prior to entering the classroom, often are ahead of their peers in terms of HL competency. However, American Sign Language as a visual-spatial language does not have an official writing system, although writing conventions used to examine and research signed languages do exist such as Si5S and Sign Writing, among others. Thus, the

task of learning and transmitting ASL grammar and syntax is done through conventional language use, including such “oral” literary traditions as sharing personal narratives, folklore and poetry. These face-to-face signed interactions exist to pass down the cultural patterns, values and beliefs of the Deaf community (Bahan, 2006). As such, the importance of frequent and varied interaction to foster conventional language use and “oral” literary tradition to serve as the primary HL input to fortify the competency of heritage signers cannot be understated.

Affective dimension: motivations and attitudes, linguistic self-confidence

Heritage language learners may have different motivations for learning their HL; while some may be motivated to reconnect with their family and culture, others may wish to pursue a career. Carreira & Kagan’s (2011) survey of over 1,700 heritage language learners asked participants to rank their top four priorities for learning their heritage language. Participants were given five options to rank: for a career or job, to connect with cultural and linguistic roots, to communicate with family and friends in the United States, to fulfill a language requirement, and to communicate with family and friends abroad. A majority (59.8%) of respondents reported their top priority was to learn about their cultural and linguistic roots, and 57.5% said the ability to communicate better with family and friends in the United States was a close second.

Learners’ attitudes may also vary; Carreira & Kagan’s (2011) study reports students generally had positive attitudes towards their HL and a study of advanced HLLs of Spanish by Alarcón (2010) also mirrors this positive sentiment, citing pride

of their language and the language variety they spoke. Heritage language proficiency may be an indicator of attitude; however, those speaking a stigmatized or low prestige variety may feel negatively towards their HL. Schwarzer and Petrón (2005) state, “[N]owhere is the lack of information concerning heritage speakers more apparent than in the area of student attitude and perceptions” (as cited in Alarcón, 2010, p. 271).

Hill’s (2012) study *Language Attitudes in the American Deaf Community* examined in four separate studies the perceptions and attitudes towards signing variety using video stimuli of 84 deaf and hard of hearing Americans. Participants rated signers on various aspects such as aesthetic, whether they appeared to sign more towards ASL or English, paralinguistic and linguistic evaluations to name a few. Although such a study does not exist for deaf-parented interpreters, we may presume the attitudes and perceptions reflected in the deaf and hard of hearing community may also persist within the deaf-parented community to some degree. The presence of these attitudes may contribute to a sense of linguistic and social insecurity, depending on the perspective of the heritage signer towards their own level of fluency and sign variety as compared to their heritage signing peers or the signing community.

Cultural dimension: identity, culture, and community

Cultural knowledge is often tied to ethnolinguistic identity – the extent to which an individual identifies with a language and ethnic group.

Beaudrie et al, 2014, p. 44

A study by Phinney et al. (2001) has indicated three factors that positively impact ethnic identity: proficiency in ethnic language, peer social interaction from their own ethnic group, and parental behaviors that promote cultural maintenance. Peer social interaction had a stronger effect than language proficiency, although parental behaviors had a significant positive effect overall. Phinney et al. (2001) also found that negative or positive associations with their heritage may cause immigrant children to either selectively disassociate or closely align to the heritage language and ethnic group.

The identity of hearing deaf-parented adults has been examined over the years, through memoirs and interviews, exploring Coda's deaf and hearing identities straddling two worlds, the linguistic phenomenon of 'Coda talk', and the experience of child language brokering⁷ among other topics. However, an area left for exploration is the development of Coda identities in relation to the identity of the deaf parent(s). The d/Deaf community is quite diverse; Senghas and Monaghan (2002) in *Signs of Their Times: Deaf Communities and the Culture of Language* offer an anthropological analysis of theoretical issues in d/Deaf community to include such debated topics as the medical and sociocultural model of deafness, oralism and signed language, the terms "hard of hearing," "deaf," and "Deaf," and early and late language acquisition, to name a few. These factors play a significant role in the development of Deaf identity, competency in signed language, and in turn may affect the identity development and HL competency of hearing deaf-parented children. In

⁷ Interpreting or brokering is often done by young bilingual children as a way to facilitate communication.

Chapter 4 I will offer three cases of heritage signers for analysis, where parental language acquisition and identity may prove to have significant influence.

The Deaf community has a strong tradition of gathering for organized events such as potlucks and socials, outdoor recreation, religious services, sports leagues, and Deaf clubs or associations, in addition to informal gatherings among Deaf family and friends. These provide opportunities for hearing deaf-parented children to engage in regular interaction with a multitude of Deaf signers, which studies suggest are key factors in increased bilingual proficiency (Gollan et al, 2015). With advances in technology, the Deaf community has engaged one another increasingly through social media by use of video logs (VLOGS), videophone calls, and text messaging; as they did with the introduction of the TTY, members of the Deaf community are changing their communication and social habits as a result (Keating & Mirus, 2003). While it is unclear what impact it may have on the face-to-face socials of old, hearing deaf-parented children may find it difficult to attain regular interaction with a variety of Deaf signers, finding instead their interactions limited to those who are Deaf in their immediate family.

In a study of Spanish heritage Speakers, Mueller (2002) and Silva-Corvalán (2003) find that those children who spoke strictly Spanish in the home presented greater fluency of their heritage language than children whose families used both English and Spanish. Kanto (2013) suggests the hearing status of HS's parents and extended family has a major impact on the language exposure of hearing Deaf-parented children, which is a factor unique to the heritage Signing population. Presumably, heritage signers with two deaf parents could have greater exposure to

signed language, compared with heritage signers with only one Deaf parent, since their Deaf parents would use it to communicate with one another as well as other Deaf adults. The number of Deaf contacts made with HS's parents could potentially increase by virtue of having two signers in the home, as compared to one. "These language contacts most seemingly provided the children with stronger exposure to sign language and also better linguistic models than in the families where the parents had very mixed ways of communicating with each other and not necessarily much contact with the Deaf community. Baker and van den Bogaerde (2008) even found that the number of Deaf close relatives influenced the sign language competence of children" (Kanto, 2013). Gollan's (2015) findings also support the notion that the number of speakers one comes into contact with using the HL may be important for supporting bilingualism, over and above the frequency of use in the HL.

Conclusion

Heritage signers find their heritage language acquisition at the convergence of politicized and controversial ideologies affecting the education and language rights of the Deaf community, which introduces several unique factors differentiating heritage signers from heritage speakers. "[...]f heritage speakers (HS) are actually exposed to unique emerging contact dialects of the heritage language or to a set of norms/dialects that already differ *before* the HS acquisition takes place, then the distinct performance of HSs in comparison to monolingual speakers cannot be attributed to attrition or true incomplete acquisition without

further inspection” (Pires & Rothman, 2009, p. 235). Which goes to say that if hearing heritage signers are exposed to unique emerging contact dialects of ASL or a pre-existing set of norms/dialects which differ, then the hearing heritage signer’s signed language performance cannot be compared to the monolingual acquisition of Deaf signers; nor may hearing heritage signers be considered to have incomplete acquisition or language attrition without further consideration. In this sense, heritage signers may present greater language variability than we might expect from heritage speakers; which necessitates educators take an informed approach with hearing heritage signers. The Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire and interview elicits pedagogically relevant data, whereby with careful analysis ASL instructors may utilize HS profiles to inform placement and differentiated instruction of hearing heritage signers.

Chapter 3

METHOD

Design

The purpose of this study was to adapt and design an instrument to elicit pedagogically relevant data to inform diagnostic, placement, and formative assessment. This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches intended to examine the soundness of the instrument's design for use with the heritage signing population. The profile questionnaire and interview questions used in this study were developed and adapted from two existing questionnaires used for Spanish heritage language learners; the first was used as an entrance and placement tool developed by María M. Carreira at California State University, Long Beach's Spanish program, and the second is a survey instrument designed by Irma Alarcón (2010) to examine the sociolinguistic profiles of advanced heritage learners of Spanish for use in pedagogy at Wake Forest University. While some questions did not require adaptation, special consideration was made for the circumstances, community, and culture that contribute to the linguistic background heritage signers' experience.

Participants

Individuals over 18 years of age, who were raised by at least one deaf parent and had used and or understood sign language to any degree of fluency, were asked to participate in the study between December 4, 2015 and January 20, 2016.

Instrument

The development of the language profile questionnaire began as an adaptation of two existing questionnaires used for Spanish heritage language learners. Questions were revised to reflect ASL usage and cultural considerations were made in adapting questions and responses in an effort to capture the diversity of the Deaf community. The definitions and word choices presented were deliberately modeled after Amy Williamson's 2015 survey of deaf-parented interpreters, so as to extend the community's shared understanding of terms established through that instrument. Utilizing the five dimensions presented by Beaudrie et al (2014) as the framework, each question was verified to ensure relevant data from each dimension would be captured.

Five dimensions with spoken-language heritage language learners (HLL) have been shown to correlate with competency in the HL: historical, linguistic, educational, affective, and cultural. The historical dimension considers the immigrant, indigenous or colonial origin of a language as well as the generational status of that language's use in the United States. The linguistic dimension considers the age and order at which HLLs acquired their HL and English, the prestige of language varieties spoken, and registers, domains, and overall amounts of HL use.

The educational dimension considers the type and amount of schooling in the heritage and dominant languages. The affective dimensions considers the motivations and attitudes and linguistic self-confidence of HLLs, and the cultural dimension considers the HLL's ethnolinguistic identity, family cultural practices, travel to "homeland" country, and interaction with the local HL community (Carreira & Kagan, 2011, Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). However, because American Sign Language is native to North America among a very exclusive population, factors such as generational status, determined in the HL framework by when one immigrated to the U.S., and the amount of schooling received in the HL must be reconsidered and reframed. For the purposes of this study, the experience of deaf children born to deaf parents is not addressed, because this population is likely to develop native fluency in signed language from early and ongoing exposure to the HL, unlike their hearing deaf-parented counterparts for which there is greater variability in HL competency.

The language profile questionnaire was designed in SurveyMonkey, an online software program specializing in survey development. The instrument consisted of 62 questions, of which 35 were required, and presented a mix of multiple-choice, open-ended, ranking questions, as well as attitudinal Likert-scaled statements. Respondents were guided through nine pages, and foreign-born and international respondents had an additional page, covering the five dimensions correlating to HL competency.

Eligibility

The first page of the questionnaire (questions 1-3, see appendix A) provided an overview of the study, including the purpose and benefit, methodology, confidentiality, and consent. Eligibility questions determined the respondent's advancement to the language profile questionnaire; a 'no' answer to any of the questions routed the respondent out of the tool.

Basic profile and historical dimension

The second page of the questionnaire (questions 4-11) collected basic profile information of the respondent, to include name, gender, age, ethnicity, audiological status, community identity and birthplace. Respondents born outside of the United States were then routed to page 3.

The third page of the questionnaire (questions 12-14) was designed to gather information about the native language(s) of international respondents, and relevant immigration information of those born outside of the United States. International respondents were given instructions to proceed with the questionnaire, and any questions with reference to the U.S. and English or ASL should be read with their home country, and native language(s) in mind.

Linguistic dimension

The fourth page of the questionnaire (questions 15-22) was intended to collect information that could help provide a broader understanding of a respondent's home language(s), as well as information about the frequency of and

environments in which signed language was used, the primary language used with immediate and extended family and friends, and whether the respondent engaged in child language brokering between the ages of 0-18 years. Question 21 asked respondents to choose which Deaf social events they attended growing up; this question was adapted to reflect traditional Deaf community events, and included an open text field to capture options not indicated. Question 22 about language brokering was added to the instrument to identify multiple and varied contacts with Deaf signers, which may attribute to greater HL fluency.

Affective questions (23-29) were inserted early in the questionnaire intentionally in order to combat potential fatigue as participants continued. In addition, these questions followed on the heels of childhood language use, which will be the frame of reference for most incoming post-secondary students.

The seventh page of the questionnaire (questions 37-48) sought information that would help to understand the language background of each parent (or parent figure) to gain perspective on the language type and variety to which heritage signers were exposed. This section also asked respondents to report their parents' written English fluency by choosing from seven levels, which were written by the researcher, guided by the CASAS Skill Level descriptors for Adult Basic Education (ABE). CASAS is a non-profit organization focused on the assessment of youth and adults, which claims validity for native and non-native speakers of English. Their assessments have been approved and validated by such government agencies as the U.S. Department of Education.

Educational dimension

No questions related to the educational experience of heritage signers in their HL appeared on the questionnaire. The U.S. educational system does not provide instruction in ASL to hearing deaf-parented children, precluding the inclusion of 1 questions addressing the educational dimension.

Cultural dimension

The sixth page of the questionnaire (questions 30-36) was similar to page four, in that it contained questions asking respondents to provide information about their present-day sign language use and exposure in their home and community, including among family, extended family and friends. Unlike page four, however, respondents were also asked to report their exposure to signed language media.

The eighth page of the questionnaire (questions 49-56) asked respondents about their current or previous educational experience in a deaf-related field of study, particularly in American Sign Language courses and Interpreter Training Programs. These questions inquired after student motivation and goals related to taking a post-secondary ASL course.

Page nine of the questionnaire (questions 57-59) related to the respondent's goals in relation to attaining interpreter certification. During the time this questionnaire was being administered, the national certifying body, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), placed a moratorium on certification and testing, which may have an effect on the climate under which the instrument was administered. In addition, RID's existing education requirement may provide

motivation for uncertified working interpreters to pursue higher education; the additional social and affective implications this may carry should be considered.

Affective dimension

Page five of the questionnaire (questions 23-29) sought information about the respondent's knowledge and attitude towards language variety, language prestige, identity development, linguistic security, and self-reported fluency in English and ASL. Research indicates that Spanish-English bilinguals evaluate their skills in Spanish more precisely than English (Delgado, Guerrero, Goggin & Ellis, 1999). Twenty-nine positive-negative Likert-scale attitudinal statements measuring the social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity were developed across the following sociolinguistic areas: language vs. dialect, register, standard language, languages in contact, and language shift. The measurement of attitudes is a complex endeavor. Attitudes may be expressed in one or more type of response: affective responses reflect our feelings, cognitive responses reflect our knowledge and beliefs, and behavioral responses reflect our reactions towards the attitude object. An attitude object may be conceptual (e.g., ideology) or tangible (e.g., coffee mug), and individual (e.g., President Barack Obama) or collective (e.g., the Republican party) (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007, p. 583). Attitude types are not always congruent. The unreliability of congruency reflects the complexities of measuring attitude; e.g., I feel cigarettes are a horrible addiction (affective), I believe they cause lung cancer (belief), I smoke a pack a day (behavioral). Therefore, it is important to have several attitude statements per attitude object to lend greater reliability to the

measurement.

Feedback and optional interview

Page 10 of the questionnaire (questions 60-62) provided an open-text field, which allowed respondents to provide feedback on the instrument; respondents were also asked for participation in the interview portion of the study.

Interview questions

The interview portion consisted of 6 open-ended questions which served two purposes in evaluating heritage signers: first, to get an indication of the HS's signed production capability, and second, to uncover potential linguistic or social insecurity and further explore the HS's ethnolinguistic identity development through respondents' narrative responses. The design of these questions purposefully brought forth the participants' awareness of their own language experience and identity development, factors of which impact HL fluency and student attitude and motivation towards heritage language learning.

Procedure

The language profile questionnaire was administered online for a period of seven weeks using network and snowball sampling (Hale & Napier, 2013). A link to the SurveyMonkey instrument was posted and shared to the researcher's Facebook page, as well as to closed Facebook pages for the deaf and hearing deaf-parented communities. Qualified participants completed an extensive questionnaire designed

to elicit pedagogically relevant information for heritage language learners. The responses were then analyzed to determine whether the instrument was able to elicit the information as intended, including ensuring that the cultural and language adaptations were relevant and inclusive of the variety that exists within the signed language community.

Social and linguistic security and identity

Interviews were conducted through an online video conferencing tool, such as FaceTime or Skype, and were recorded for later review. To begin, participants were instructed via spoken English to respond to questions using whichever language they chose, with the knowledge that the interview questions would be asked in American Sign Language. Because bimodal bilinguals have the unique ability to express both languages simultaneously utilizing two modalities, and especially considering potential stigmatization by others in the signing community, participants were told they were welcome to express themselves in that manner. The interviews were then analyzed to determine whether the questions elicited the desired data.

Sample

A total of 197 responses were received; however, only 72 were complete and used for analysis. A total of 37 respondents opted-in for the interview, and, of those, 11 were successfully interviewed.

Data analysis procedure

Considering that the purpose of this study was to adapt and design an instrument to elicit pedagogically relevant data to inform diagnostic, placement, and formative assessment, the data analysis focused solely on the task of whether the elicitation was successful. In order for a question to be determined successful, the response provided must answer the question in such a way that it provides useful information to heritage language instructors. In other words, an instructor would be able to take away a good sense of what is being described. Secondly, the question must allow for the expression of diversity found within the Deaf community through the response options and review of the open-ended feedback allowing respondents to comment on the design of the instrument. Third, when aggregated, the responses would provide the instructor with a holistic view of the heritage signer, to include all five dimensions outlined in the design of the instrument as well as their sociolinguistic knowledge of ASL (Beaudrie et al, 2014).

To begin the analysis of the positive-negative Likert-scaled language attitudinal statements, each statement was identified as lending itself to social/linguistic security or social/linguistic insecurity, positive or negative ethnolinguistic identity, and further identified for favorable/unfavorable sociolinguistic factors. For each statement, respondents were asked to choose from the following scale: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *somewhat disagree*, *somewhat agree*, *agree*, and *strongly agree* as their options, along with *N/A*. All of the negative-scaled items were reverse-scored, and where necessary separated, e.g., a *strongly agree* rating of the statement “I use ‘pure’ American Sign Language” may indicate linguistic

security, however, it may also indicate an unfavorable element of language prestige, and further education warranted on the topic of language and dialect. While the overall measurement focused on social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity, nesting the language attitude statements in the context of the five sociolinguistic factors allowed for a more rich, albeit more complex, understanding of attitudes.

Methodological limitations

This instrument was designed to be administered to incoming post-secondary heritage signers between the ages of 18 - 21 interested in taking American Sign Language. However, a population with a median age of 37 tested the instrument. The quality of responses may be reflective of those with life experience and education well beyond the incoming postsecondary HS student, which may in turn affect the researcher's understanding of the true efficacy of the questions. The experience of heritage signers at 18 may be vastly different than at 37, and thus the questionnaire and responses may not accurately reflect the incoming postsecondary HS population. Further testing with the target population is needed to better gauge the effectiveness in elicitation of this instrument.

Questions about the educational experience of heritage signers in ASL were not asked, as it was presumed that this information would not be accessible given the current definition of who qualifies for such education under IDEA and FERPA. This instrument does not capture the educational experience of heritage signers who may have benefitted from a bimodal bilingual educational setting, such as

through charter or private schools. Future iterations of this instrument should include a section on education received in the HL.

The six interview questions asked of participants were conducted by an in-group member, which may have both positive and negative implications. While on the one hand participants may feel a level of trust and comfort to be able to answer more candidly about their experience, which may not be possible with out-of-group members; on the other hand, participants may seek to answer in a way that aligns them with the interviewer, or traits perceived to be favorable to the interviewer. Either way, the interviewer must take care to provide a sense of security for participants to respond.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A review of each question, their corresponding responses, and open-ended feedback reveals three areas to consider in improving the instrument: instrument accessibility, flexible response options, and expanded response options. A secondary review in the form of a case analysis compares the data of three heritage signers, and two corresponding interviews for further discussion.

Respondents

A total of 197 responses were received, of which 72 were complete and used for analysis. Of those 72 respondents, 66 were U.S.-born respondents and the remaining six were foreign-born. A total of 37 respondents opted-in for the interview; 14 of those respondents had prior ITP experience. Eleven participants were successfully interviewed. The median age of respondents was 37 years old.

Instrument accessibility

One respondent commented on the general accessibility of the instrument, citing the use of written English as intimidating and indicating a preference for questions presented in ASL. Although this may be possible in the future, time did not

allow for the implementation of this option prior to launching the questionnaire. While the issue was not widespread, consideration for preference and accessibility may add to the user experience. The administration of this instrument under the supervision of an ASL instructor may alleviate this concern.

Flexible response options

Respondent feedback on questions 17-18, and 31-32, which addressed communication with nuclear and extended family and friends, indicates complex communication patterns and intricate family networks that could not be accurately reflected with the options available. Many respondents wished to indicate the percentage of their time spent signing and/or speaking, to choose from a broader selection of family members, to indicate the family member's bilingual status, and/or to specify the context (e.g., hearing family, deaf family, mix of both). These are the factors heritage signers say they consider when selecting the language(s) used to communicate. In addition, respondents wished to recognize changes in audiological status and identity over time, as these may impact how certain questions are answered.

*** 14. NUCLEAR FAMILY**

Growing up, how did you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

Definitions: (Williamson, 2015)

Parent A: main parent figure that lived in your home and had a significant role in your upbringing.

Parent B: second parent figure that lived in your home while growing up and had a part in your upbringing.

	Relationship	Status	Language
Parent A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ASL <input type="checkbox"/> Parent(s) native sign language <input type="checkbox"/> Mix of ASL and native sign language <input type="checkbox"/> English-like signing (no voice) <input type="checkbox"/> Signing AND Speaking (at the same time) <input type="checkbox"/> Signing OR Speaking (not at the same time) <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Parent B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

Figure 1: Sample of language options for nuclear and extended family and friends

*** 15. EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS**

Growing up, how did you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

Extended Family A is related to Parent A

Extended Family B is related to Parent B

	Relationship	Status
Extended Family A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grandmother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandfather <input type="checkbox"/> Aunt <input type="checkbox"/> Uncle <input type="checkbox"/> School Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Parent(s) Friend	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A		<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A		<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Figure 2: Sample of relationship options for extended family A

Expanded response options

Reviewing the answers coded *other* proved an important exercise as it revealed several response categories to consider adding to the instrument, expanding the range to include the diversity of heritage signers.

In the section on language exposure while growing up, question 16 elicited *other* responses from eight percent of respondents. The categories cited as particularly overlooked include *parent's work* and *child language brokering*. Several respondents indicated their parent's place of work as being a residential school for the deaf, where they utilized signed language to the extent they felt it worthwhile reporting. Alternately, others indicate interpreting for their parents. Similarly, 20 percent of respondents used the *other* response category on question 21 about the types of Deaf community social events attended during childhood; responses could be summed up into two additional groupings: *family and friend gatherings* and *school for the deaf events*.

Nearly 17 percent of respondents indicated *other* when asked about their present-day community involvement, reflecting the changing level of engagement that has become available to them as adults. However, upon reviewing the responses, it became clear a separate question should be added to reflect the professional engagement with the Deaf community. The addition of the following categories would be a good start: *Deaf organizations, community outreach, career in Deaf-related field, workshop presenter, advocacy, conferences, and academia*. While the instrument was designed to target incoming post-secondary heritage signers

between the ages of 18-21, this should not preclude the possibility of returning students, or mature first-time students.

The term “native language” is used in several questions throughout the survey, and is generally used to describe the language used from birth. In parts of the survey the term “native language” was offered as a response option along with ASL and English in an effort to allow the opportunity for respondents to describe the first language used by foreign-born heritage signers or their parents. It is used in several different sections of the questionnaire to elicit Language A for the Heritage Signer, Parent A and Parent B, as well as an option to describe the communication between them. While it is not incorrect for U.S.-born individuals to use the term “native language” to describe their first language of either English or ASL, most respondents differentiated the use of the term ‘native’ to mean something other than English or ASL, and as many as eight percent of respondents used it to describe no language, gesture, home sign, or an ASL variant (PSE) used *before* their parent learned ASL. While these responses were unexpected, it indicates a need to broaden the options available to reflect the type of language, communication systems and situations by which Deaf individuals communicate and acquire language.

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN THE AGE OF 0 - 18 YEARS.

*** 12. Growing up, what language(s) did you use within your home?**

Language A:
native or mother-tongue,
acquired from birth

Language B:
second language

Language C:
third language

Figure 3: Example usage of term "native language" for heritage signer

Language

✓

ASL

Parent(s) native sign language

Mix of ASL and native sign language

English-like signing (no voice)

Signing AND Speaking (at the same time)

Signing OR Speaking (not at the same time)

Speaking

Other

Figure 4: Example usage of term "native language" for nuclear family

Q40: Parent A: Language Profile

Language A:native or mother tongue, acquired at birth

Language B:second language

Age of Acquisition

Language C:third language

Age of Acquisition

Primary Language Currently Used:

oral English

Sign Language (SEE)

English (0-10), SEE (10-14)

ASL

(14-Adult)

English & ASL (Evenly split)

Figure 5: Example usage of term "native language" for parent language profile, and one respondent's interpretation of usage

Q41: Parent A: Language Fluency		
	Expressive	Receptive
Spoken English	4 - Very Good	4 - Very Good
American Sign Language	4 - Very Good	4 - Very Good
Native Sign Language	4 - Very Good	4 - Very Good

Figure 6: Example usage of term "native language" for parent language fluency

Measurement of attitude

Understanding the attitudes of heritage signers must be taken in context, which is to say that the individual's lived experience and current situation in which the attitude is expressed also have an affect on the output being measured (Eagly and Chaiken, 2007). Such is the case with question 24; the median age of respondents was 37 years old and with experience and perspective behind them, these respondents were aware of their current situation and how it shaped their response. Without the same breadth of experience and introspection, 18-21 year olds might be expected to declare stronger attitudes.

Question 24: Do you think that some sign language varieties are more prestigious than others? Explain.

“No, but when I was younger I did. My perceptions of signed languages have evolved as I’ve immersed myself as an adult in education programs and social events. Below I was forced to rank them. I ranked them according to how I believe community members perceive them.”

“In my eyes, no. Of course, I acknowledge that there are some out there who do.”

“My preference is ASL, due to the beauty and clarity of the language. However not everyone has the same privilege and filters. Prestigious is a judgment I am not comfortable with.”

Figure 7: Sample responses to attitudinal question about language prestige

Question 29 continued the analysis of attitudes and addressed social and linguistic security and identity measurement statements. A Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis was performed in order to measure the internal consistency, or how closely related a set of items is within a group. While not a statistical analysis, this internal correlation coefficient revealed a score of $\alpha = 0.541$ ($n=29$), which shows room for improvement. One possible reason for a low α is the multiple underlying factors for each of the items, and as previously stated, the statements were nested in five sociolinguistic areas. An attempt to measure five of the sociolinguistic areas separately also proves problematic, as the number of test items within each category is too small.

Comparative case analysis

In this exercise, three cases of heritage signers and their corresponding interviews are examined employing the research and principles presented in the literature review. In this manner an ASL instructor may consider that data's impact on diagnostic, placement, and ongoing formative assessment. The selection criteria used for this case analysis is as follows: Heritage Signer's language A = English; Parent A's language A = English, Parent A's primary language currently used = ASL, and Parent A's status = Deaf.

In considering the linguistic dimension, family composition and language use during childhood were examined. Heritage Signer A (HS-A) was raised with three Deaf ASL users in the home, HS-B with two, and HS-C, one (see Table 4). Looking at the data provided about extended family reveals all three heritage signers have at least one Deaf extended family member who uses ASL, although the frequency of contact was varied: HS-A reported having contact with this family member monthly while HS-B and C reported contact a few times a year. Both HS-A and B had Deaf family friends who visited at various intervals throughout the year. The potential for each of HS-A's Deaf family members having their own extended deaf network of friends with whom HS-A may come into contact with is great. Additionally, ASL was reported to have been used in a variety of settings: HS-A used ASL at home, school, church (biweekly, 2-3 hours), social environments (monthly, 4-5 hours), and public spaces; HS-B used ASL at home, and in social environments (frequency not reported) and public spaces; and HS-C used ASL at home (see Tables 5 and 6). These

factors increase the likelihood for frequent and ongoing contact with a variety of Deaf signers, which may prove to be beneficial for HL competency (Gollan, 2015).

Growing Up: Nuclear Family				
		A	B	C
Parent A	Relationship	Mother	Mother	Mother
	Status	Deaf	Deaf	Deaf
	Language	Signing OR Speaking (not at the same time)	Signing AND Speaking (at the same time)	Signing AND Speaking (at the same time)
	Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily
Parent B	Relationship	Father	Step Father	Father
	Status	Deaf	Deaf	hearing
	Language	ASL	ASL	Speaking
	Frequency	Daily	Daily	Daily
Sibling	Relationship	Sister	Brother	
	Status	hearing	hearing	
	Language	Speaking	Speaking	
	Frequency	Daily	Daily	
Sibling	Relationship	Sister	Brother	
	Status	Deaf	hearing	
	Language	ASL	Speaking	
	Frequency	Daily		

Table 4: Comparative case analysis for HS-A, B, and C: nuclear family

Childhood Language Exposure and Use			
Language experience between the ages of 0 – 18 years			
	A	B	C
Growing up, what language(s) did you use within your home?	ASL and English	English ASL	English BASIC Sign Language (SEE)
As you were growing up, in which of the following environments did you use American Sign Language? Mark as many as apply:	Home	Home	Home
	School		
	Church		
	Social Environments	Social Environments	
	Public Spaces	Public Spaces	

Table 5: Comparative case analysis HS-A, B, and C: languages used and environments

Growing up, did you attend:			
	A	B	C
Church Services in Sign Language?	Yes	No	Yes
At What Age	All of the above		Age: 6 – puberty
Frequency	Once Every Two Weeks		Weekly
Average Duration (per event)	2-3 hrs		2-3 hrs
Deaf Social Events?	Yes	Yes	Yes
At What Age	All of the above	All of the above	All of the above
Frequency	Monthly		Monthly
Average Duration (per event)	4-5 hrs		4-5 hrs

Table 6: Comparative case analysis HS-A, B, C: frequency of community exposure

Similarly, frequent and ongoing contact with a variety of hearing individuals may prove beneficial to spoken English competency as well. All HSs reported having contact with hearing family members and friends ranging from daily to a few times a year, and engaging in child language brokering for their parent(s). In both the cases of ASL and spoken English, there is potential for dialectical and register exposure of varying types.

Growing up, did you interpret* for:				
*Interpreting or brokering is often done by young bilingual children as a way to facilitate communication.				
		A	B	C
Parent A	Relationship	Mother	Mother	Mother
	Status	Deaf	Deaf	Deaf
	Frequency	Monthly	Once Every Two Weeks	Weekly
Parent B	Relationship	Father	Step Father	
	Status	Deaf	Deaf	
	Frequency	Monthly	Once Every Two Weeks	

Table 7: Comparative case analysis HS-A, B, and C: child language brokering

In the cases of all three HSs, Parent A is considered to have late second-language acquisition (LSLA) of ASL, with all three rating Parent A's expressive and receptive ASL ability as 4-Very Good. Recalling Palmer's (2015) study of ASL and English word order of bilingual bimodal hearing deaf-parented children, the children were found to have prolonged development that differs from native deaf children at the age of 40 months, and therefore, caution should be taken not to overestimate competency in the areas of complex ASL grammatical and syntactic features, especially for those with LSLA (see table 8).

PARENT A: Language Profile			
	A	B	C
Language A:	English	English (born hearing; deaf age 3)	Oral English
Language B:	ASL	ASL	Sign Language (SEE)
Age of Acquisition	11	15	English (0-10), SEE (10-14)
Language C:			ASL
Age of Acquisition			(14-Adult)
Primary Language Currently Used:	Spoken English or ASL	ASL	English & ASL (Evenly split)

Table 8: Comparative case analysis HS-A, B, and C: Parent-A language profile indicating LSLA of ASL

In rating Parent-A's spoken English fluency, HS-A rated Parent A as having 3-Good to Fair expressive and 2-Poor receptive ability; HS-B rated Parent A as 4-Very Good for expressive and 3-Good to Fair for receptive spoken English; and HS-C rated

both expressive and receptive spoken English as 4-Very Good. HS-A rated parent A's written English fluency as reading at high school level, whereas HS-B and C rated parent A's written English fluency as reading at college level. The spoken English fluency rating is confounded by Parent A's *physical* capability to speak, and *physical* ability to hear and perceive (through lip reading or other visual cues) spoken English. What is not clear is to which degree these ratings are reflective of their English fluency, which is why we must also consider their written English ability. From the linguistic dimension we begin to get a sense of the bilingual competency of the Parent A, the type of language(s) used in the home, and the frequency and context of signed contacts. Based on what we have examined thus far, we can begin to develop language profiles for HS-A, B and C.

Heritage Signer A is U.S.-born, presumed to have bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) of ASL and English from both parents. HS-A's Parent A is U.S. born, presumed to be native in English, with late second language acquisition (LSLA) in ASL – age 11; with a spoken English proficiency rating of 3-Good to Fair for expressive and 2-Poor for receptive, and ASL proficiency of 4-Very Good for both expressive and receptive ability. HS-A rated Parent A's written English as 'can read and understand high school level textbooks.' HS A's home language is presumed to be a mix of spoken English and ASL considering the family makeup: Parent A (Deaf) – signs or speaks, not at the same time; Parent B (Deaf) – ASL; sibling (hearing) – spoken English; sibling (Deaf) – ASL. In addition, one extended deaf family member makes monthly contact, and several adult d/Deaf friends with bi-weekly contact in ASL. American Sign Language was used in the following environments: home,

school, church, social environments, and public spaces. Based on this limited amount of information, HS-A's early language profile indicates the potential for a moderately rich and varied exposure to ASL in predominantly social contexts, including those that are academic and religious. HS-A's ASL vocabulary is likely conversational-level, and may include basic academic and religious signs. Although the years of exposure or the level of engagement is unknown, acquisition with passive exposure becomes more robust with active engagement.

Heritage Signer B is U.S.-born, presumed to have bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) of ASL and English from both parents. Parent A is U.S.-born, presumed to be native in English, with late second language acquisition in ASL – age 15; rated by HS-B to have a spoken English proficiency rating of 4-Very Good for expressive and 3-Good to Fair for receptive, and ASL proficiency of 4-Very Good for both expressive and receptive ability. HS-B rated Parent A's written English at reading college level textbooks. HS-B's home language is presumed to be a mix of spoken English and ASL considering the family makeup: Parent A (Deaf) – signs and speaks, at the same time; Parent B (Deaf) – ASL; sibling (hearing) – spoken English; sibling (hearing) – spoken English. In addition, a mix of several hearing and one deaf extended family member made contact a few times a year in ASL, and several adult deaf friends made contact between every few months and a few times a year utilizing ASL and English-like signing (no voice). American Sign Language was used in the following environments: home, social environments, and public spaces. Based on this limited amount of information, HS-B had exposure to ASL in predominantly social contexts. HS-B's ASL vocabulary is likely conversational.

Heritage Signer C is U.S.-born, presumed to have bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) of ASL and English⁸. Parent A is U.S.-born, presumed to be native in English (profile indicates oral), learning the visual sign system SEE between ages 10-14, with late second language acquisition in ASL – age 14. HS-C rated Parent A with a spoken English proficiency rating of 4-Very Good for both expressive and receptive, and ASL proficiency of 4-Very Good for both expressive and receptive ability. HS-C rated Parent A's written English as reading college level textbooks. HS-C's home language is presumed to be a mix of predominantly spoken English with Signed English support considering the family makeup: Parent A (Deaf) – signs and speaks at the same time and Parent B (hearing) – English. In addition, one late-deafened extended family member made contact monthly using spoken English, and one Deaf extended family member made contact a few times a year, with the language used indicated as "other." Considering the mix of language and modality options that were made available to the respondent, an exploration of the "other" selection would be interesting, perhaps during the interview. HS-C reported that American Sign Language was used only at home, but reported attending weekly religious services in ASL for 2-3 hours, and monthly Deaf social events in ASL for 4-5 hours. What is unclear is whether HS-C engaged in those environments using ASL, or simply overlooked reporting these activities in the prior section; this would also be something to clarify during the interview. Based on the limited amount of

⁸ Heritage Signer C self-identifies as a bilingual, reporting the use of Signed Exact English (SEE), which is a signed system that utilizes the grammatical features of the English language. During an interview, HS-C reveals late second language acquisition of ASL through coursework; although it is not clear the degree to which Parent-A used ASL grammatical features in HS-C's early language acquisition.

information gathered, HS-C had exposure to ASL in limited social contexts. HS-C's ASL vocabulary is likely conversational.

Based on the comparative analysis of HSs A, B and C (see Table 9), the ways in which the linguistic dimension factors shape how, when, where, and why ASL and English are used can be seen. The instrument demonstrates how, with limited selection criteria, three seemingly similar heritage signers proved to have three distinct early linguistic experiences, which would not have been ascertained simply by knowing that their parents were Deaf. However, the early linguistic environment is not fully indicative of a heritage signer's acquisition trajectory, or their end-state fluency; as the remainder of the HS profile is examined and placed into context, the instructor is able to build a relatively comprehensive heritage language profile.

	A	B	C
Basic Profile	Born in U.S.	Born in U.S.	Born in U.S.
Languages	ASL and English	English and ASL	English and Basic Sign Language (SEE)
Environments	Home, School, Church, Social, Public	Home, Social, Public	Home
Parent A	Deaf Signing OR Speaking (not at the same time)	Deaf Signing AND Speaking (at the same time)	Deaf Signing AND Speaking (at the same time)
Parent A Language Profile	Lang A: English Lang B: ASL, age 11 Current: Spoken English or ASL	Lang A: English (deaf age 3) Lang B: ASL, age 15 Current: ASL	Lang A: Oral English Lang B: SEE, age 10 Lang C: ASL, age 14 Current: English & ASL (equal)
Parent A Language Fluency	Spoken English Expressive: 3 good to fair Receptive: 2 poor Written English H.S. level textbooks ASL Expressive: 4 very good Receptive: 4 very good	Spoken English Expressive: 4 very good Receptive: 3 good to fair Written English College level textbooks ASL Expressive: 4 very good Receptive: 4 very good	Spoken English Expressive: 4 very good Receptive: 4 very good Written English College level textbooks ASL Expressive: 4 very good Receptive: 4 very good
Nuclear Family	Parent B Deaf/ASL Sibling hearing/English Sibling Deaf/ASL	Parent B Deaf/ASL Sibling hearing/English Sibling hearing/English	Parent B hearing/English
Extended Family	Deaf/ASL (1) monthly Hearing/English (3) weekly/monthly	Deaf/ASL (1) few times a year Hearing/English (3) few times a year	Deaf/ASL (1) few times a year Hearing/English (1) monthly
Friends	Deaf/ASL (2) bi weekly deaf/Sign AND Speak (1) weekly Hearing/English (2) daily	Deaf/ASL (1) every few months Deaf/English like signing (no voice) (1) few times a year	

Table 9: Summary of comparative case analysis HS-A, B, and C

While data from the questionnaire certainly gives the instructor a good sense of the heritage signer, the qualitative aspect of the interview brings greater dimension to the interpretation. In the case of HS-C, the statement “I don't like it when peers correct my signing” was rated as *agree*, which was categorized as indicating social and linguistic insecurity related to language shift⁹; however, during the interview HS-C states,

My signing tends to be on the more English side, which follows what my mom does...and so when people correct me-- not interpreting, but when I'm communicating in sign language-- on my sign choices, I get really mad and very protective. Because it's [both hands move to chest] my, my mom's language, and you know my, my childhood language, ummm...[looks up and throws hands up in the air, slaps them on their lap], so...[nervous chuckle]

With this additional data, not only does it confirm the aspect of social and linguistic insecurity, but it also raises the element of ethnolinguistic identity. These additions may also help bring clarity to other items in the instrument and thus, the tremendous benefit of interview data, which allows the instructor to observe body language, intonation and the occasional direct explanation, must not be overlooked.

The qualitative analysis of HS-A, B and C through the language profile questionnaire and interview when paired with quantitative language assessment may provide instructors a more precise analysis of signed language competency as it relates to social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity. Therein lies the pedagogically relevant data for heritage signers, which, ASL instructors may use to inform diagnostic, placement, and formative assessment.

⁹ Language shift is a term to describe the ‘shift’ to English within a few generations; particularly with immigrant languages, as described by Valdés, 2001 and Carreira & Kagan, 2011 in Table 2.

CONCLUSION

We know enough... to make us suspect that the process of further development of a first language is fundamentally different from the process of L2 acquisition.

- Valdés, 2001, p. 21

Summary

Historically, the instruction of American Sign Language has employed a foreign language teaching framework. Research, however, has shown that foreign language teaching methods do not address the distinct pedagogical needs of heritage language learners. Instructing deaf-parented individuals as heritage language learners requires American Sign Language teachers to use pedagogically relevant data to inform diagnostic, placement, and formative assessment decisions in post-secondary institutions.

This study sought to answer the following question: *Does the Heritage Language Profile Questionnaire and Interview successfully elicit pedagogically relevant data from deaf-parented individuals, to frame them as heritage language learners of ASL?* Subsequently, it required asking how the experience of deaf-parented individuals is congruent to that of heritage speakers when examined under the framework of heritage language learners and whether deaf-parented individuals may therefore benefit from the pedagogical theory of heritage language learners.

A review of the literature establishes the experiences of heritage speakers and heritage signers as consistent in all five dimensions identified to impact HL fluency: historical, linguistic, educational, affective and cultural. This strongly suggests heritage signers should be considered heritage language learners where ASL is concerned. While the language input of heritage signers may vary widely, which in some aspects is similar to heritage speakers, the politicized and controversial ideologies affecting the education and language rights of the Deaf community may present additional considerations towards heritage signers' social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity. Establishing heritage signers as heritage language learners therefore, allows the field of ASL instruction to consider the vast research on heritage language learners and heritage language pedagogy. Heritage signers may benefit from heritage language research through the adaptation and development of the Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire and interview.

The sixty-two question questionnaire includes twenty-nine positive-negative Likert-scale attitudinal statements measuring social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity across the following sociolinguistic areas: language vs. dialect, register, standard language, languages in contact, and language shift. The corresponding interview consists of six open-ended questions. A comparative case analysis of three Heritage Signers, and one corresponding interview reveals the ways in which the linguistic dimension factors shape how, when, where, and why ASL and English are used. The instrument demonstrates how, with limited selection

criteria, three seemingly similar heritage signers presented three distinct early linguistic experiences.

The Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire and interview serves as the launch point to understanding heritage sign language learners. The findings of this study indicate successful elicitation among hearing heritage signers. Further review reveals the need for an expansion in response categories and greater flexibility in reporting the complex linguistic dynamic of families; additionally, language preference may be considered as an aspect of instrument accessibility. Through the use and analysis of the data collected by this instrument, instructors may begin to understand the need for change in the instructional approach of heritage sign language learners.

Implications

The recognition of linguistic diversity among heritage sign language learners and its impact on ASL pedagogy, is emergent among ASL instructors (Ashton et al, 2013). By framing deaf-parented individuals as heritage sign language learners, ASL instructors may begin to understand the purpose and benefits of heritage language research; and with deliberate application and ongoing evaluation, ASL instructors may work towards development of best practices for heritage sign language instruction.

María Carreira (2012) in *Formative Assessment in HL Teaching: Purposes, Procedures, and Practices* makes a case for diagnostic assessment to “fine tune the curriculum according to the needs of particular classes” in addition to ongoing

formative assessment of heritage language learners “to mitigate the challenges of diversity through placement” (p. 100). Similarly, Webb and Miller (2000) argue that HL teachers need to “understand the social and affective issues that go along with various levels of HL knowledge” (as cited in Carreira, 2012, p. 101). Utilizing the Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire and interview instrument is the first step American Sign Language teachers may take towards addressing these pedagogical concerns.

Diagnostic assessment includes a formal and informal assessment of language fluency for the purposes of placement. Educators should consider administering formal ASL assessments such as The American Sign Language Comprehension Test (ASL-CT), and/or The American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) in addition to the informal assessment of ASL fluency during the post-language profile interview. These assessments examined within the context of the heritage signer’s language profile aide in course placement. Some institutions offer heritage language courses targeted to support specific areas, such as grammar and syntax, or reading and writing (for spoken language); however, if no such courses are available, curricular modifications may be considered. Although, placement alone cannot ameliorate all the challenges presented with classroom diversity.

With an understanding of the heritage sign language learner’s language profile and fluency through diagnostic assessment, the instructor should further examine HSL’s social and linguistic security and ethnolinguistic identity through the 29 positive-negative Likert-scaled language attitude statements. Additionally,

reviewing the informal interview for social and affective issues may aid in the interpretation of the language attitude statement results.

Beaudrie, Ducar and Potowski (2014) in *Heritage Language Teaching: Research and Practice* argue that a “sociolinguistically informed approach combined with differentiated instruction and continuous formative assessment, as well as a focus on students’ capabilities and goals, are important underpinnings for successful language instruction” (p. v). The adoption of a sociolinguistically informed approach to ASL instruction fosters an environment where linguistic variation and diversity is appreciated and understood, leading to a more positive classroom environment for heritage sign language learners. Beaudrie, Ducar and Potowski (2014) summarize seven goals for heritage language instruction as developed by Valdés (1995) and Aparicio (1997),

1. Language maintenance
2. Acquisition or development of a prestige language variety
3. Expansion of bilingual range
4. Transfer of literacy skills
5. Acquisition or development of academic skills in the heritage language
6. Positive attitudes toward both the heritage language and various dialects of the language, and its cultures
7. Acquisition or development of cultural awareness

The endeavor to explore and adapt heritage language research for use with heritage sign language learners, would allow the field of ASL instruction to capitalize on the wealth of existing research. Doing so may allow the education of heritage signers in post-secondary ASL courses to become more meaningful; the overall experience of learning a HL in an environment dominated by L2 users may improve, leading to greater persistence of heritage signers in IEP/ITPs. Not least of all, ASL

instructors may uncover the potential of a pedagogical theory for heritage sign language instruction.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: SurveyMonkey Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire

Participant Information Page and Consent Form

Dear Colleague,

I am a graduate student at Western Oregon University in the College of Education working toward my Master of Arts degree in Interpreting Studies under the supervision of Amanda Smith. I am conducting a research study to develop a language profile tool so that post-secondary American Sign Language (ASL) instructors may collect baseline language profile data to use towards tailoring their instruction (called "differentiation") of Heritage Signers as they study their heritage language. Heritage Signer is a term to refer to those individuals whose home language was sign language, to which they may display varying degree of fluency. When a heritage signer chooses to learn their heritage language in a formal setting, they are now considered heritage language learners.

You are invited to participate in a research study focusing on the educational needs of Heritage Signers. Little research has been done to understand the instructional needs of heritage signers studying their heritage language, therefore by contributing to this research effort, your insight and experiences can guide the education of Heritage Signers toward a more effective practice. The results of this study will be used to fulfill the partial graduation requirement of a Master's thesis.

Method of Data Collection

In order to participate in this study, you will be asked to partake in an online survey, and an optional interview. It is expected the survey will take 20 - 25 minutes, and the interview, 20 minutes.

Eligible Participants

Heritage Signers, age 18 and over. A Heritage Signer for the purposes of this study is defined as someone who:

1. Was raised by deaf parent(s)
2. Used or understood sign language within the home with varying degree of fluency

Purpose and Benefit

This research study aims to bring greater understanding surrounding the learning factors that may impact Heritage Signers placed in American Sign Language courses. The findings from this study will provide instructors baseline data for placement considerations, data to use in diagnostic, formative and summative assessments, in addition to framing each Heritage Sign student as a unique learner among their second language learner peers. With this data instructors may be better equipped to consider how they may differentiate instruction for Heritage Signers through formative and summative assessment; which may be a contributing factor in the level of persistence of Heritage Signers completing an Interpreter training program.

Confidentiality

Participants will be asked to answer questions related to their background, family language use, and individual language history. To best ensure confidentiality, your name, location, and/or any other identifying information will not be used in the cataloging of data, nor mentioned in the final thesis publication. There are no perceived physical or psychological risks of any kind associated with this study.

The primary investigator and her faculty advisor will have sole access to your individual language profile. Compiled survey data will be reported in a graduate thesis with no identifying information – specific locations, names, etc. will not be discussed.

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected laptop and only the researcher and her faculty advisor will have access to the records. If you provide identifying information, be assured that the write-up of data will use pseudonyms, and situations will be modified to make it nearly impossible to identify individuals.

Voluntary Consent

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If at any point you decide to discontinue, you may discontinue your participation at any time without fear of retaliation. If you decide to discontinue your participation, all data collected from you will be destroyed and will not be included in the research study. By signing the document below, you are giving consent to take part as a subject in this research study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact Su Isakson, Principal Investigator at isakson14@wou.edu or 503-233-7878. You may also contact Amanda Smith, Thesis Committee Chair, at asmitha@wou.edu or 503-838-8850. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the WOU Institutional Review Board at any time regarding the study at irb@wou.edu or 503-838-8200.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Western Oregon University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you for your participation!

Su Isakson

Western Oregon University
College of Education
Program of Master of Arts in Interpreting Studies

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

* 1. Are you over 18 years of age?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

* 2. Were you raised by one or more Deaf parent(s)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

* 3. Growing up, did you use and/or understand sign language in your home, with any degree of fluency?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Basic Profile

* 4. What is your first name?

* 5. What is your last name?

* 6. What is your gender?

* 7. What is your age?

8. What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 9. What is your audiological* status? (choose one)

*Audiology refers to one's physical ability to hear.

- ☐ hearing
- ☐ hard of hearing
- ☐ deaf
- ☐ late deafened

* 10. I identify* as...(choose all that apply)

*Identity refers to cultural identity, your self-perception and self-conception, feeling of belonging to a group.

- ☐ hearing
- ☐ hard of hearing
- ☐ late deafened
- ☐ deaf
- ☐ Deaf
- ☐ Code

* 11. Which country were you born?

- ☐ United States
 - ☐ Outside of the United States
- Please specify country

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Non-US Born Heritage Signer

If your native sign language is not ASL, please proceed with the questionnaire, however whenever it says 'American Sign Language' or 'ASL' answer it in the context of your native sign language. Similarly, where there are references to 'English', please answer in the context of your native spoken language. Any references to the United States, or implications to living in the United States should be considered in the context of your home country.

12. International respondents, please indicate your native language(s):

Language A:

native or mother-tongue,
acquired from birth

Language B:

second language

13. How old were you when you moved to the United States?

14. What language(s) did you use within your home before moving to the U.S.?

Language A:

native or mother-tongue,
acquired from birth

Language B:

second language

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section I: Childhood Language Exposure and Use

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE BETWEEN THE AGE OF 0 - 18 YEARS

* 15. Growing up, what language(s) did you use within your home?

Language A:

native or mother-tongue,
acquired from birth

Language B:

second language

Language C:

third language

* 16. As you were growing up, in which of the following environments did you use American Sign Language?

Mark as many as apply:

☐ Home

☐ School

☐ Church

☐ Social Environments

☐ Public Spaces

☐ Other (specify below)

Specify:

* 17. NUCLEAR FAMILY

Growing up, how did you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

Definitions: (Williamson, 2015)

Parent A: main parent figure that lived in your home and had a significant role in your upbringing.

Parent B: second parent figure that lived in your home while growing up and had a part in your upbringing

	Relationship	Status	Language	Frequency
Parent A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parent B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

* 18. EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS

Growing up, how did you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

Extended Family A is related to Parent A

Extended Family B is related to Parent B

	Relationship	Status	Language	Frequency
Extended Family A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

19. Growing up, did you attend:

	Yes/No	At What Age	Frequency	Average Duration (per event)
Church Services in Sign Language?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

20. Growing up, did you attend:

	Yes/No	At What Age	Frequency	Average Duration (per event)
Deaf Social Events	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

21. If yes, which events: (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Deaf Club
- ☐ Potlucks or BBQ
- ☐ Storytelling Events
- ☐ Theatrical Performances
- ☐ Sociale (ice cream, coffee)
- ☐ Outdoor Recreational Events
- ☐ Expos and Exhibits
- ☐ Sports Leagues
- ☐ Other (please specify)

22. Growing up, did you interpret* for:

*Interpreting or brokering is often done by young bilingual children as a way to facilitate communication.

	Relationship	Status	Frequency
Parent A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parent B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section II: Student Self-Assessment

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR VIEWS OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

- * 23. What variety of sign language do you currently use, and to what degree? (total may not exceed 100%)

	%
Standard ASL Variety	<input type="text"/>
English Variety (ex: MCE, SEE)	<input type="text"/>
Contact Variety (ex: PSE)	<input type="text"/>

- * 24. Do you think that some sign language varieties (Contact sign/PSE, SEE, ASL, etc..) are more prestigious* than others? Explain.

*having a higher status.

- * 25. How would you rate your fluency?

	Expressive	Receptive
English (spoken)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
American Sign Language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

- * 26. Rank the following sign language varieties in order of prestige.
(1 - most prestigious, 3 least-prestigious)

1	<input type="text"/>	Contact Sign (PSE)
2	<input type="text"/>	Signed English (MCE, SEE)
3	<input type="text"/>	ASL

* 27. How do you classify the sign language variety that you use? (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Standard
- ☐ Educated
- ☐ Variation of the Standard
- ☐ Pure
- ☐ Correct
- ☐ Less Educated
- ☐ Incorrect
- ☐ Regional
- ☐ Home Signs
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 28. How do you feel when identified as a Coda or Deaf Parented Individual? Explain.

* 29. Rate the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I feel the sign language I use isn't as good as real ASL.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use standard American Sign Language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use a variation of American Sign Language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use 'pure' American Sign language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It bothers me that my sign language vocabulary feels limited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel my sign vocabulary isn't smart enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy learning new signs all the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I know enough sign language to use in any situation, like giving a formal presentation, teaching a subject, or having a debate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not many people use "pure" ASL.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
My signing is not as good as those who know real ASL.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everybody signs a little differently, but it's all ASL to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact sign (PSE) is a part of American Sign Language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable using ASL and English simultaneously.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like sometimes I sign too 'Englishy'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like sometimes I don't sign 'ASL' enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like being able to use a mix of both English and ASL to express myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I appreciate when older Deaf native signers correct my signing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sign better than my Deaf parent(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I dislike when older Deaf native signers correct my signing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can't imagine ever signing better than my Deaf parent(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like being known as the best signer out of all my peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't like it when peers correct my signing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel bad I don't sign as well as others in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It doesn't bother me that others in my community sign better than I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like it when I'm recognized as being a native signer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign language is a part of who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign language is just a tool to help me communicate with my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't consider sign language a part of my identity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I feel sign language is more than just a language, it's my culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section III: Present Day Language Exposure and Usage

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR PRESENT-DAY LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE.

* 30. How often do you use sign language in the following settings:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

* 31. NUCLEAR FAMILY

How do you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

Definitions: (Williamson, 2015)

Parent A: main parent figure that lived in your home and had a significant role in your upbringing.

Parent B: second parent figure that lived in your home while growing up and had a part in your upbringing

	Relationship	Status	Language	Frequency
Spouse/Partner	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parent A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parent B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sibling	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

* 32. EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS

How do you communicate with:

(must complete at least one row, leave any rows that do not apply to you blank)

	Relationship	Status	Language	Frequency
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Extended Family	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Co-Workers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Co-Workers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Co-Workers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

33. Do you attend:

	Yes/No	Frequency	Average Duration (per event)
Deaf Church	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

34. Do you attend:

	Yes/No	Frequency	Average Duration (per event)
Deaf Social Events	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

35. If yes, which events: (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Deaf Club
- ☐ Potluck or BBQ
- ☐ Storytelling Events
- ☐ Theatrical Performances
- ☐ Socials (ice cream, coffee)
- ☐ Outdoor Recreational Events
- ☐ Expos and Exhibits
- ☐ Sports Leagues
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 36. Do you view any of the following in ASL? If so, how many hours per week?

VLOGS, Stories and
Entertainment:

Deaf News

ASL Bible

Other

Other

Other

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section IV: Parent(s) Language Profile

THE FOLLOWING PROFILE IS FOR PARENT A, THE MAIN PARENT FIGURE THAT LIVED IN YOUR HOME AND HAD A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN YOUR UPBRINGING.

▪ **37. PARENT A: Basic Profile**

Gender:

Age:

Birthplace:

▪ **38. Parent A: Audiological Status**

- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened, specify age below
-

▪ **39. Parent A: Identity**

- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as deaf
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as Deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as hearing
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as Deaf
- ☐ deaf
- ☐ Deaf

40.

Parent A: Language Profile

Language A:

native or mother tongue,
acquired at birth

Language B:

second language

Age of Acquisition

Language C:

third language

Age of Acquisition

Primary Language

Currently Used:

41. Parent A: Language Fluency

	Expressive	Receptive
Spoken English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
American Sign Language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Native Sign Language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

42. Parent A: Written English Fluency (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Can read & write simple words or phrases
- ☐ Can read and understand simple sentences on familiar topics.
- ☐ Can handle basic reading & writing tasks related to life roles.
- ☐ Can handle most routine reading & writing tasks related to life roles.
- ☐ Can read and understand high school level textbooks
- ☐ Can read and understand college level textbooks
- ☐ Can read and write college level academic papers

THE FOLLOWING PROFILE IS FOR 'PARENT B', THE SECOND PARENT FIGURE THAT LIVED IN YOUR HOME WHILE GROWING UP AND HAD A PART IN YOUR UPBRINGING.

43. PARENT B: Basic Profile

Gender:

Age:

Birthplace:

44. Parent B: Audiological Status

- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened, specify age below

45. Parent B: Identity

- ☐ Hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as hearing
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as deaf
- ☐ Hard of Hearing - identifies as Deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as hearing
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as deaf
- ☐ Late Deafened - identifies as Deaf
- ☐ deaf
- ☐ Deaf

46.

Parent B: Language Profile

Language A:

native or mother tongue,
acquired at birth

Language B:

second language

Age of Acquisition

Language C:

third language

Age of Acquisition

Primary Language

Currently Used:

47. Parent B: Language Fluency

	Expressive	Receptive
Spoken English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
American Sign Language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Native Sign Language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

48. Parent B: Written English Fluency (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Can read & write simple words or phrases
- ☐ Can read and understand simple sentences on familiar topics.
- ☐ Can handle basic reading & writing tasks related to life roles.
- ☐ Can handle most routine reading & writing tasks related to life roles.
- ☐ Can read and understand high school level textbooks
- ☐ Can read and understand college level textbooks
- ☐ Can read and write college level academic papers

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section V: Student Goals - Education in a Deaf-Related Field of Study

THIS SECTION IS ABOUT YOUR CURRENT OR PREVIOUS HIGHER-EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT RELATED TO THE FIELD OF DEAFNESS.

49. Are you currently in school?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

50. What degree are you pursuing?

(If you have graduated, indicate the highest degree level achieved in a deaf-related field)

* 51. Are you currently pursuing, or do you already have a degree in a deaf-related field of study?

(AA, BA, MA, PhD: Deaf Studies, ASL Studies, Interpreting, etc...)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

52. Indicate your major:

- ☐ Deaf Studies
☐ American Sign Language
☐ Interpreting
☐ My degree is not in the above categories. (specify below)

Specify your major:

53. How far along are you in your program?

If you graduated, indicate how many years ago (1, 2, 3...)

* 54. Have you ever attended an Interpreter Training/Preparation/Education Program?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes, I graduated.
☐ Yes, currently enrolled, or did not graduate.

How many semesters did you attend the program?

* 55. I have taken American Sign Language classes.

- ☐ Currently enrolled
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, it was waived as a requirement

56. What was the main reason for taking American Sign Language: (choose one)

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Section V (a): Student Goals - Certification or Alternative Pathway

• 57. Are you currently RID certified?

☐ Yes (skip to next page)

☐ No

☐ No, I'm pre-certified.

Indicate how long ago you took the written exam in months. example: 48 months = 4 years

58. If you are not certified, are you pursuing RID's alternate pathway towards certification?

☐ Yes

☐ No

59. If you're pre-certified, when do you expect to take the performance exam?

☐ < 6 months

☐ 6 months - 1 year

☐ No immediate plans

Heritage Signer Language Profile Questionnaire

Interview

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Your response helps shape this language profile tool so professors may better understand Heritage Signers as sign language students, and thus may tailor their teaching to better accommodate the needs of Heritage Language Learners.

60. Please leave any feedback regarding the profile questionnaire here.

Interested in helping the study further?

This tool would be given to new and incoming sign language students along with an in-person interview. If you are interested in helping pilot the interview questions through Adobe Connect or Skype, please fill out the form below. To participate, you will need access to a laptop with a camera and high-speed internet.

Video Release Consent

I. Acknowledgement of video recording

By requesting an interview, I agree to be video recorded as part of my participation in the study, "Heritage Signers: Language Profile Questionnaire", conducted by Su Kyong Isakson.

II. Purpose & Usage

Video footage will be used to identify pedagogically relevant data and themes, which will be compiled in an individualized language profile report, and in turn, will be provided to the participant's instructor to inform teaching strategy.

Furthermore, data may be compiled and reported on across all study participants in a graduate thesis, withholding any personally identifying information.

III. Confidentiality & Storage

I understand that the video will not include my name and will be kept in a secure place. I understand that access to the video will be limited to the principal investigator, Su Kyong Isakson and her faculty advisor.

IV. Access & Dissemination

I understand that clips from the video may be viewed by other researchers for the purpose of further analysis.

61. Yes, I would like to participate in the interview! Please contact me.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

62. The following days and times (EST) work best for me:

	8 am - 11 am EST	12 pm - 3 pm EST	4 pm - 8 pm EST
Sunday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuesday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wednesday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thursday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saturday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

1. What was your experience when you first realized your language at home with your parents/family was unique compared to what was used outside of the home?
2. To what extent did you use your heritage language as a child? Now? How has that changed?
3. How do you view your language use as an adult compared to those in your peer group (other heritage signers)? To other foreign language students?
4. What has your overall experience been as a heritage signer?
5. Share with me a particularly memorable moment surrounding language.
6. What in particular about your language fluency would you like to improve? In what ways will this program benefit you?